

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 HONG K 05561 01 OF 02 140955Z

12

ACTION AGR-10

INFO OCT-01 EA-09 ISO-00 EB-07 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /035 W
----- 130709

P R 140755Z MAY 76

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0318

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 HONG KONG 5561

FOR AGRICULTURE, FAS,FCA, GRAIN AND FEED DIVISION

FROM: AGRICULTURAL OFFICER

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, CH

SUBJECT: UNFAVORABLE SPRING WEATHER AFFECTS CHINA'S GRAIN CROPS

REF: TOFAS 26 OF APRIL 16, 1976

BEGIN SUMMARY: COMBINATION OF UNSEASONAL COLD WEATHER OVER MUCH OF CHINA THIS SPRING, AND UNUSUALLY DRY CONDITIONS IN NORTH AND NORTH-EAST AND PROLONGED WET WEATHER IN SOUTH, IS BELIEVED TO HAVE HAD HARMFUL EFFECT ON WINTER WHEAT YIELDS AND CAUSED REDUCTION IN AREA SOWN TO SPRING WHEAT AND AREA OF TRANSPLANTED EARLY RICE. AS RESULT, OUTLOOK FOR THOSE THREE IMPORTANT GRAIN CROPS AT THIS TIME IS LESS FAVORABLE THAN A MONTH OR SO AGO. HOWEVER, AS MORE INFORMATION BECOMES AVAILABLE, OUTLOOK MAY IMPROVE--OR WORSEN. END SUMMARY

1. ALTHOUGH CHINA'S 1975-76 WINTER WHEAT CROP GOT OFF TO GOOD START ON A LARGER AREA THAN LAST YEAR, UNFAVORABLE WEATHER CONDITIONS THIS SPRING--PRIMARILY BELOW-NORMAL TEMPERATURES AND LATE FROST--ARE BELIEVED TO HAVE CAUSED A REDUCTION IN YIELDS. GENERALLY DRY CONDITIONS IN THE NORTHEAST THROUGHOUT THE WINTER AND EARLY SPRING PREVENTED THE FULFILLMENT OF THE SPRING WHEAT SOWING PLAN. UNSEASONAL, CONTINUING LOW TEMPERATURES AND WET WEATHER IN THE SOUTH ARE ALSO BELIEVED TO HAVE DELAYED THE TRANSPLANTING OF CHINA'S EARLY

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 HONG K 05561 01 OF 02 140955Z

RICE CROP AND REDUCED ITS AREA. THE RESULT IS A LESS FAVORABLE

OUTLOOK FOR THE HARVESTS OF THOSE THREE IMPORTANT GRAIN CROPS THAN WAS THE CASE A MONTH OR SO AGO. HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SITUATION, AS SEEN AT THIS TIME, FOLLOW.

2. WINTER WHEAT. THIS SPRING, THERE WERE A NUMBER OF EXCEPTIONS TO NORMAL CLIMATIC PATTERNS IN WHICH WEATHER IS GENERALLY DRY IN NORTHERN CHINA AND WET IN THE SOUTH. EXCEPTIONS IN THE NORTH AND NORTHWEST INCLUDED KANSU WITH EXCESSIVE RAIN AND SNOWFALL AND SHANSI AND SHENSI WITH EXCEPTIONALLY ABOVE-NORMAL PRECIPITATION. IN THE SOUTH, A LESS IMPORTANT WHEAT REGION, KWANGTUNG, KWANGSI CHUANG AND HUNAN WERE RELATIVELY DRY IN EARLY SPRING BUT THE PRECIPITATION INCREASED SIGNIFICANTLY IN THOSE PROVINCES IN MID-APRIL. OTHER PROVINCES IN THE REGION GENERALLY RECEIVED EXCESSIVE PRECIPITATION IN FEB AND APRIL.

3. MORE SERIOUS FOR THE WINTER WHEAT CROP HAVE BEEN PERSISTENT ANTI-CYCLONE CONDITIONS WITH LOW TEMPERATURES WHICH GAVE RISE TO UNUSUALLY LATE FROSTS. AS LATE AS THE LAST WEEK IN APRIL, FROST WAS FORECAST FOR THE HUAI RIVER AND MIDDLE AND LOWER YANGTZE VALLEY REGIONS, AND DAILY MINIMUM TEMPERATURES INDICATED THAT FROST PROBABLY DID OCCUR IN THOSE AREAS. IN FACT, ALL PARTS OF CHINA WITH VERY FEW EXCEPTIONS HAVE EXPERIENCED BELOW-NORMAL TEMPERATURES RANGING FROM 4 TO 6 DEGREES CENTIGRADE (C) BELOW NORMAL IN LATE MARCH AND EARLY APRIL IN THE SOUTHWEST, SOUTH AND EAST, TO 2-3 DEGREES C BELOW NORMAL IN NORTH AND NORTHWEST CHINA.

3. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH IMPRESSIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN WATER CONSERVANCY AND CONTROL, OVER PAST SEVERAL WINTERS SHOULD MINIMIZE EFFECTS OF DROUGHT AND EXCESSIVE RAINFALL, THERE IS LITTLE PROTECTION AGAINST OR RECOVERY FROM THE WINTERKILL WHICH IS BELIEVED TO HAVE HURT WINTER WHEAT IN NUMBER OF AREAS LAST WINTER. WORSE IS PROBABLE DAMAGE FROM LATE FROST OVER MUCH OF CROP AREA: OCCURRENCES OF PROBABLY KILLING FROSTS IN SHANSI 17 DAYS IN APRIL; FROST AND LIGHT FROST IN SHANTUNG AND HOPEH (SECOND- AND THIRD-LEADING WINTER WHEAT PROVINCES) AND SHENI IN FIRST THREE WEEKS OF APRIL; HEAVIER FROSTS IN HONAN (LEADING WINTER WHEAT PROVINCE); AND LIGHT FROST IN NORTHERN ANHWEI IN EARLY APRIL.

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 HONG K 05561 01 OF 02 140955Z

4. AS RESULT, IT IS NOW TENTATIVELY ESTIMATED THAT LATE FROST DAMAGE COULD CONCEIVABLY REDUCE UNIT-YIELDS BY AS MUCH AS TEN PERCENT, WHICH WOULD SHARPLY ALTER EARLIER OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK (SEE REFTEL).
CROSS

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 HONG K 05561 02 OF 02 141048Z

12

ACTION AGR-10

INFO OCT-01 EA-09 ISO-00 EB-07 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

COME-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /035 W

----- 000497

P R 140755Z MAY 76

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0319

INFO USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

UNCLAS SECTION 2 OF 2 HONG KONG 5561

FOR AGRICULTURE, FAS,FCA, GRAIN AND FEED DIVISION

FROM: AGRICULTURAL OFFICER

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, CH

SUBJECT: UNFAVORABLE SPRING WEATHER AFFECTS CHINA'S GRAIN CROPS

REF: TOFAS 26 OF APRIL 16, 1976

5. SPRING WHEAT. WINTER WAS VERY DRY IN CHINA'S NORTHEAST, WHERE MORE THAN HALF OF ALL SPRING WHEAT IS GROWN. PRECIPITATION WAS ONLY TWO-THIRDS OF NORMAL WHICH, IN TURN, CAUSED LOW LEVELS OF SOIL MOISTURE--HARDLY IDEAL CONDITIONS FOR PLANTING SPRING WHEAT IN LATE MARCH AND EARLY APRIL. IN FIRST HALF OF APRIL, HOWEVER, SNOW AND RAIN FELL OVER MANY PARTS OF HEILUNGKIANG (LEADING SPRING WHEAT PROVINCE) AND KIRIN, RELIEVING DROUGHT IN EASTERN REGIONS IN PARTICULAR, BUT NOT MUCH IN WESTERN AREAS NOR, PROBABLY, IN INNER MONGOLIA. HOWEVER, THE PRECIPITATION CONTRIBUTED TO A LOWERING OF TEMPERATURES, BOTH COMBINING TO DELAY SPRING WHEAT PLANTING. RESULT WAS SHORTFALL OF APPROXIMATELY 133,000 HECTARES (HA) IN HEILUNGKIANG (NCNA APRIL 30), WHICH IS SEVEN PERCENT BELOW LAST YEAR'S 1.87 MILLION HA. WORSE STILL IS FORECAST OF DRY WEATHER INTO MAY.

6. COMMENT: FRAGMENTARY INFORMATION THUS INDICATES THAT WITH UNUSUALLY DRY SOIL, COLD WEATHER AND DELAYED AND REDUCED
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 HONG K 05561 02 OF 02 141048Z

PLANTINGS IN NUMBER OF AREAS, THE OUTLOOK FOR CHINA'S SPRING WHEAT CROP--AT LEAST AT THIS POINT IN TIME--IS NOT PARTICULARLY FAVORABLE. IF INNER MONGOLIA AND OTHER SPRING WHEAT PROVINCES ALSO DID NOT MEET LAST YEAR'S SOWING LEVELS, AND IF DROUGHT CONDITIONS PERSIST OVER WIDE AREAS, CHINA'S 1976 SPRING WHEAT HARVEST COULD BE DOWN BY FIVE PERCENT OR MORE FROM LAST YEAR'S HARVEST (ESTIMATED AT 5.2 MILLION METRIC TONS (MT)).

7. EARLY RICE. CHINA'S EARLY RICE CROP ALSO HAS BEEN AFFECTED BY ABNORMAL WEATHER THIS SPRING. PRECIPITATION IN MANY PARTS OF SOUTHERN CHINA HAS BEEN ABOVE NORMAL AND LOW TEMPERATURES AND CLOUDY WEATHER MORE PROLONGED. AS RESULT OF THE GENERALLY UNFAVORABLE WEATHER, AN UNUSUAL AMOUNT OF SEEDLING ROTTING OCCURRED IN RICE SEEDBEDS, AND TRANSPLANTING WAS DELAYED.

8. KWANGTUNG, CHINA'S LEADING RICE PROVINCE, EXPERIENCED ITS WORST SPRING IN YEARS (NCNA, MAY 8, 1976) AND, AS A RESULT, THE AREA OF TRANSPLANTED RICE IN THAT PROVINCE IS APPROXIMATELY 10 PERCENT SMALLER THAN THAT OF 1975.

9. COMMENT: THE TRANSPLANTING SHORTFALL IN KWANGTUNG, FROM 31 MILLION MOU IN SPRING 1975 TO A REPORTED 28 MILLION MOU THIS SPRING, IS PARTICULARLY SERIOUS BECAUSE KWANGTUNG IS CHINA'S LEADING RICE-GROWING PROVINCE, NORMALLY ACCOUNTING FOR SOME 15 PERCENT OF CHINA'S TOTAL EARLY RICE AREA. IT APPEARS PROBABLE THAT THE UNFAVORABLE WEATHER--IN PARTICULAR LOW TEMPERATURES--IN MANY OTHER RICE-GROWING AREAS THIS SPRING ALSO ADVERSELY AFFECTED SEEDBEDS AND THE RATE AND COVERAGE OF TRANSPLANTING, ALTHOUGH NOT NECESSARILY AS SERIOUSLY AS IN KWANGTUNG.

10. IT SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED THAT ABOVE ASSESSMENTS ARE BASED ON HIGHLY FRAGMENTARY INFORMATION AND ARE THUS PRELIMINARY AND TENTATIVE IN NATURE AND SUBJECT TO REVISION AS MORE INFORMATION BECOMES AVAILABLE. AT THIS TIME, HOWEVER, THE OUTLOOK FOR CHINA'S WINTER AND SPRING WHEAT CROPS DOES NOT APPEAR AS FAVORABLE AS IT DID EARLIER THIS SPRING, AND THE PROSPECTS FOR CHINA'S EARLY RICE CROP (ACCOUNTING FOR APPROXIMATELY 40 PERCENT OF TOTAL ANNUAL RICE PRODUCTION) ARE NOT VERY PROMISING.

11. POSSIBLE EFFECT ON GRAIN TRADE: IT APPEARS HIGHLY UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 HONG K 05561 02 OF 02 141048Z

UNLIKELY THAT THE EXPANSION IN WINTER WHEAT AREA WHICH WAS ACHIEVED LAST AUTMNN COULD OFFSET SIGNIFICANTLY THE EXPECTED YIELD DECREASES FROM WINTERKILL AND FROST INJURY. THE EXPECTED SHORTFALL IN SPRING WHEAT PRODUCTION ADDS TO THE PROBLEM, ALTHOUGH

SPRING WHEAT IS ONLY 13-14 PERCENT OF CHINA'S TOTAL WHEAT CROP. THE NET RESULT, HOWEVER, WILL BE A DECLINE IN WHEAT PRODUCTION FROM THE RECORD LEVEL OF 38.8 MILLION MT ACHIEVED LAST YEAR.

12. IT IS TOO EARLY TO TELL WHETHER OR NOT THIS SITUATION -- IF BORNE OUT BY HARVEST RESULTS -- WILL LEAD TO STEPPED-UP IMPORTS OF GRAIN (WHICH ARE NOW AT THE LOWEST LEVEL SINCE 1960). MUCH WILL DEPEND ON WHERE THE MOST SERIOUS SHORTFALLS OCCUR AND WHETHER OR NOT DOMESTIC TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES PERMIT EASY MOVEMENT OF GRAIN TO AREAS OF SHORT SUPPLY. THE NET RESULT OF CHINA'S TOTAL RICE HARVEST THIS YEAR ALSO WILL BE AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION IN ANY DECISION CONCERNING GRAIN IMPORTS.

CROSS

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, WHEAT, METEOROLOGY, GRAINS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 MAY 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976HONGK05561
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760186-0940
From: HONG KONG
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760555/aaaabuju.tel
Line Count: 237
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION AGR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CollinP0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28 JUN 2004 by wolfsd>; APPROVED <21 JAN 2005 by CollinP0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: UNFAVORABLE SPRING WEATHER AFFECTS CHINA'S GRAIN CROPS
TAGS: EAGR, EPAP, TPHY, CH
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006